

Shaping Our Future: The TELL Kentucky Working Conditions Survey

**A Guide for Local School Boards
and Superintendent Teams**

Facilitator Guide



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Items in italics are suggested comments for the facilitator.

*Print the following pages from this guide for use by participants:
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Session Outcomes

1. To help you better understand the TELL Kentucky Survey
2. To help you better understand how to utilize results of the TELL survey in district improvement planning
3. To identify actions for your board/superintendent team for each of the five leadership roles of the school board as you plan for improvements using the results of the TELL survey

Overview

What

- TELL – Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning
- Administered by the New Teacher Center in partnership with the TELL Steering Committee
- Statewide survey of school-based certified staff (teachers and principals) to assess working conditions at the school, district and state level
- Designed as a support for schools and districts and to provide information for school and district improvement planning

Why

- Based on the premise that the conditions teachers face in schools and classrooms are essential elements of student achievement and teacher retention
- Research shows the importance of positive working conditions to improving student achievement, as well as attracting and retaining effective teachers

When

- Surveys administered in 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017
- Both the survey and the results are available for review at www.tellkentucky.org

Getting Started

This guide is designed to focus on the leadership roles of the school board in using the results of the survey.

- Adapted from the district leadership guide that is available on the TELL Kentucky website
- Designed for the board/superintendent team to review a few of the survey results and begin the conversation about actions and next steps for utilizing the results

As district leaders, we must be prepared to carry out the leadership roles of the board:

- Set clear expectations – establish a clear focus for improvements using the results as one source of data
- Create the conditions for success – demonstrate commitment to improvement through board discussion and action (time and resources)
- Hold the system accountable – determine indicators of progress, routinely monitor, and receive reports
- Create the public will to succeed – create awareness of the district needs as you connect with the community
- Learn as a board team – establish time to learn together about the results and what they tell us about retaining teachers, improving teaching and improving student learning

TELL Kentucky Survey available online at www.tellkentucky.org.

The activities guide school board/superintendent teams as they begin discussion on trends related to specific working conditions and to ensure data is used in school improvement planning. It will assist district leaders in

reflecting on the overall status of working conditions and to consider potential strategies and solutions to enhance conditions throughout the district.

- This is one of several guides available to the school board/superintendent team, SBDM councils and district administrators that may be used to examine the survey results.
- Additional guides to facilitate these discussions are available at www.tellkentucky.org.

Conversations need to occur within every school in the district to inform the work of district and school improvement planning. Suggested participants for this session include the school board/superintendent team and district administrators.

A collaborative effort across district leadership provides opportunities for reflection and increases the likelihood of accomplishing change initiatives aligned across the district.

It is up to the district leadership to dig into the vast amount of data available from the TELL Kentucky Survey as goals for district and school improvements are established.

The Eight Working Condition Constructs

Time – Available time to plan, collaborate and provide instruction; and eliminating barriers to maximize instructional time during the school day.

Facilities and Resources – Teacher access to technology, instructional supplies, office materials and other school resources.

Community Support and Involvement – Community and parent/guardian communication and influence in the school.

Managing Student Conduct – Policies and practices to address student conduct issues and ensure a safe school environment.

Teacher Leadership – Teacher involvement in decisions that impact classroom and school practices.

School Leadership – The ability of school leadership to create trusting, supportive environments and address teacher concerns.

Professional Learning – Availability and quality of learning opportunities for educators to enhance their teaching.

Instructional Practices and Support – Data and support available to teachers to improve instruction and student learning.

Survey results may be accessed online at www.tellkentucky.org.

Say something like ...

This first activity is a general overview that asks districts to review one question that best represents an area related to school board governance from each of the eight different constructs of the TELL Kentucky Survey. After recording the data for your district for these eight questions, you will determine trend data and focus discussion on those findings. The analysis of trend data will bring better understanding to the changes perceived by school-based educators in your district that are within the realm of board governance.

Access your district's comparison results for 2017, 2015 and 2013 by clicking on the comparison results icon to the right of the name. These reports contain data for years 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017.



Note: As they discuss leadership, be sure they define leadership – i.e. board members, superintendent, administrators, SBDM council members, principal and teacher leaders.

<p style="text-align: center;">TELL Kentucky Survey Questions</p> <p>Questions included in this comparison best represent areas related to school board governance.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Percent Agreement</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The percentage of educators who responded either 'agree' or 'strongly agree' to these questions</i></p>			
	2011	2013	2015	2017
<p>TIME: 2.1a</p> <p>Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have the time available to meet the needs of all students.</p>				
<p>FACILITIES AND RESOURCES: 3.1c</p> <p>Teachers have access to reliable communication technology, including phones, faxes and email.</p>				
<p>COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT: 4.1b</p> <p>This school maintains clear, two-way communication with the community.</p>				
<p>MANAGING STUDENT CONDUCT: 5.1c</p> <p>Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.</p>				
<p>INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AND SUPPORT: 9.1e</p> <p>Provided supports (i.e. instructional coaching, professional learning communities, etc.) translate to improvements in instructional practices by teachers.</p>				
<p>TEACHER LEADERSHIP: 6.1c</p> <p>Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues.</p>				
<p>SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: 7.1b</p> <p>There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school.</p>				
<p>PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: 8.1a</p> <p>Sufficient resources are available for professional development in my school.</p>				

Activity I: District Level Comparison Reflections

How can local school boards allocate resources to reduce the barriers to teaching and learning brought about differences noted in the trend data?

Reflecting on the district results for each construct and the roles of the board in improving student achievement (listed below), how might the district assist in addressing persistently low areas and maintaining growth in the positive ones?

Identify possible actions for your board/superintendent team for each of their roles in leading the district to success.

Note: In this section, answers in *italics* are examples for use by the facilitator, if needed.

Leadership Roles of the School Board

Set clear expectations

Communicate that all students can learn at high levels

Create the conditions for success

Explore options for providing resources for communication technology equipment

Hold the system accountable

Determine process for monitoring effectiveness of professional development

Create the public will to succeed

Host meetings to engage in two-way dialogue regarding the survey results

Learn as a board team

Attend training sessions together to learn about how to best utilize the survey result

Activity II: District Level Support

Say something like ...

One of the benefits of the TELL KY survey is that the data can inform district leaders as to how the district supports that are currently in place are perceived.

- Reflect on district-level supports for school level leadership.
- Consider what systems and supports are currently in place in your district to meet these needs and place that information in the corresponding box.
- In the other box provided, write down the ideal systems and structures needed to support district needs.

Note: In this section, answers in *italics* are examples for use by the facilitator, if needed.

Activity II: District Level Support (continued)

District Support System	What is currently in place in your district?	What is the ideal for your district?
Policies for professional learning for principals to enhance their instructional leadership skills and create positive working conditions	<i>PD Policies</i> <i>Early release days</i> <i>Planning days</i>	
Procedures for induction of principals new to school leadership and/or new to the district	<i>Procedures for new staff orientation</i>	
Process for identifying issues and practices across schools to improve working conditions	<i>Needs assessments in DIP and SIP</i>	
Process for engaging parents/guardians and the community in school activities and improvement planning	<i>DIP and SIP committees</i> <i>SBDM Councils</i> <i>Website, Community Forums</i>	
Policies and practices specific to engaging teachers in decision making within schools	<i>SBDM Policies</i>	
Process to meet with the SBDM councils and address the needs identified in the TELL survey	<i>Board policy</i> <i>Annual or semi-annual meetings of board and council</i>	
Process for identifying and highlighting schools with best practices to create positive working conditions	<i>Recognizing and sharing of practices with positive outcomes throughout the district</i>	

Activity II: District Level Support (continued)

Are the support systems currently in place the same as the ideal?

If not, why might they be different? Does it vary by school, and if so, how and why?

Ask participants to individually jot down answers. We will refer back to them in the next activity.

Activity III: Next Steps – Continuous Improvement for Success

Say something like ...

As you continue to plan for improvements, continue to focus on ways this data can be helpful as you carry out your roles and responsibilities as board members in areas such as staffing for hard-to-staff schools, teacher and principal retention, professional development, facilities and resources, and student conduct.

Select one of the systems identified in Activity II.

Begin to discuss possible actions for improvement – keeping in mind that this is one source of data and that it must be used alongside other sources of data to develop improvement plans.

- What is currently in place?
- What would be ideal?
- What keeps us from achieving the ideal?
- Identify steps to accomplish the ideal.
- Identify specific strategies that will help make the ideal the reality.
- What resources will it take to make the ideal a reality?

To help guide your reflections and decision making, use the following plan format in the same manner as the district improvement plan.

Activity III: Continuous Improvement for Success

Note: In this section, answers in *italics* are examples for use by the facilitator, if needed.

Area for Improvement

Time	Facilities and Resources	Managing Student Conduct
Community Support and Involvement	Teacher Leadership	Professional Learning
Instructional Practices and Support	School Leadership	New Teacher Support

Priority Need From Activity II – What is currently in place?	Goal (to address the priority need) From Activity II – What would be ideal?
<i>Process for engaging parents/guardians and the community in school activities and improvement planning</i>	<i>Every parent/guardian participate in at least one academic event, meeting, conference every year</i>
Root Cause and Contributing Factors What keeps us from achieving the ideal?	Objectives with Measures of Success Identify steps to accomplish the ideal
<i>Parents/guardians do not understand the importance of their involvement in their child's education.</i>	<i>Communicate why it is important to be involved through various media/community outlets – cable TV, cinema previews, brochures, etc.</i>

Activity III: Continuous Improvement for Success (continued)

Action Plan

Need	Strategy/Activity	Expected Impact	Responsible Person(s)	Start Date	End Date	Estimated Resources and Costs	Outcomes
	Steps that must happen to achieve the ideal	Progress and Success	Who needs to participate				
<i>Engaging parents/guardians</i>	<i>Provide “do you know” type statements to media</i>	<i>Parents/guardians will better understand how important it is to be involved</i>	<i>Staff Administrators Parents/guardians</i>	<i>7-1- 17</i>	<i>On-going</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>More parents involved in their child’s education</i>

Activity III: Continuous Improvement for Success

Next Steps Reflections

How will your district use the information gathered from these activities as part of the district improvement plan already established in your district?

How will the long-term goals you have identified be incorporated into the district strategic plan?

Identify actions for your board/superintendent team in the improvement process for each of their roles in leading the district to success.

Note: In this section, answers in italics are examples for use by the facilitator

Leadership Roles of the School Board

Set clear expectations

Set short- and long-term goals using survey results as one piece of data

Create the conditions for success

Provide resources to meet the identified needs

Hold the system accountable

Review the district needs assessment with school administrators and SBDM councils

Create the public will to succeed

Inform the community about the needs of the district

Learn as a board team

Attend conference sessions to learn about best practices

Sample closing remarks for facilitator

In closing, please keep in mind that this guide is intended to begin the discussion among district leaders on ways the survey results may be helpful in planning for improvements. I encourage you to continue to review the results of the survey and to make these results one of several pieces of data used to identify board actions in districtwide improvement efforts.